

Where Did The Cuba Critics Go?

GOP EASES SNIPING TO REAPPRAISE POLICIES

By TED LEWIS
Chicago Tribune Press Service

WASHINGTON — A strange pause in the GOP's preoccupation with the Cuba issue has most definitely developed. The obvious conclusion is that administration critics believe they have drained the issue dry, but that simple explanation is misleading.

A wide and somewhat disconcerting variety of reasons is being offered by party leaders, in and out of Congress for what at least is a temporary muffling of the Cuba issue.

These include the explanation that a "party line" needs to be established before the issue gets out of hand, because some name Republicans urge invasion and a total blockade, while others oppose extreme measures, at least at this time.

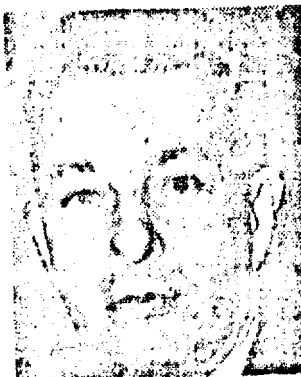
Such a reappraisal of the party's position on the question of what action, if any, the Kennedy administration should be pressured to take, makes considerable sense. Especially as Cuba most certainly will be a hot issue in the 1964 national elections.

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In this connection, there is no doubt that some Republicans, including Senate GOP leader Everett Dirksen (Ill.), have been disturbed over the possibility that administration Democrats would try to pin the "war party" tag on the GOP.

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This fear was generated especially when Rep. William Miller (N.Y.), Republican national chairman, called for a blockade of Cuba even if such a blockade was construed as an act of war.

Even before Miller sounded off along this line, so called "moderate influences," particularly in the Senate GOP policy



SEN. EVERETT DIRKSEN
Concerned Over War Tag

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continued moved for soft pedaling of the administration for failure to act forcefully to eliminate the Red threat to miles from the U.S. shores.

Sen. Bourke Hickenlooper (R-Iowa) and Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.) pleaded in closed party meetings, it was learned, for what they called "a more responsible approach." And they warned that it could be politically dangerous now to disavow a bipartisan foreign policy, so far as Cuba was concerned.

There have been indications that former President Eisenhower, as well as New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller made their weight felt somewhat along the same line.

Such pressures as these constitute as good an explanation as any now available for the relative Cuba calm in Congress in the last few weeks.

For example, Sen. Kenneth Keating (R-N.Y.), chief baller of the administration on Cuba, has been strangely silent since March 3. On that date he issued his last blast, charging that CIA intelligence on Cuba had always been competent — but that it was the administration's refusal to accept CIA intelligence findings that was to blame for the Cuba mess.

Since then Keating's tacks have been interesting. For example, in answer to a letter from a former soldier asking him why he was "so eager to invade Cuba," Keating replied:

"Let me say in the strongest language I can use that I do not favor an invasion of Cuba, and never have and have never said so. I am not even convinced that a blockade or quarantine will become necessary, provided we promptly take other steps in our power."

There is plenty of solid evidence that the Cuba lull has taken hold, despite opposition of national chairman Miller and others who think the issue has caught on with the public and should not be allowed to die down, even if for a while.

The last weekly issue of the

Republican congressional committee's newsletter, after weeks of blazing away on the Cuba issue, switched to criticism of President Kennedy's tax program and budget proposals.

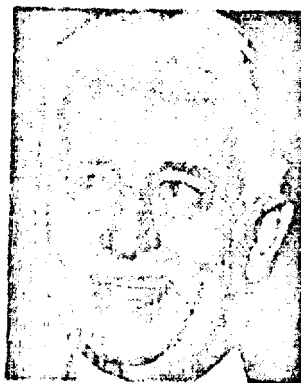
And Sunday Rep. John W. Byrnes (R-Wis.), chairman of the House Republican policy committee, switched to the new cautious "party line" approach.

Byrnes denied that Republicans were demanding action "now." Their complaint, he insisted, was that the administration lacked a real Cuba policy.

"That is what we are asking, that at least a policy be determined and then we will judge it," he said.

But the Cuba lull did not entirely develop as a result of efforts by party leaders to restrain the sharpest, most bellicose critics of the administration.

The "go easy" approach was sold most effectively to Keating and other leading critics by CIA chief John McCone. As a partisan Republican, McCone was able to make out a case for his agency's efficiency in keeping tabs on Cuba.



SEN. KENNETH KEATING
Suddenly He's Silent